In the Claims:

The current status of all claims is listed below and supercedes all previous lists of claims.

1. – 29. (canceled)

30. (currently amended) A method of identifying a virus comprising:

amplifying nucleic acid from said virus with a pair of primers which hybridize to conserved regions of a housekeeping gene that is conserved among members of a viral family to produce an amplification product[[,]];

measuring [[the]] a base composition of said amplification product, wherein the base composition identifies the number of A residues, C residues, T residues, G residues, U residues, analogues thereof and mass tag residues thereof in the amplification product; and

comparing the base composition of said amplification product with known base compositions of amplification products of members of said viral family produced by using said pair of primers wherein a match of base composition of said amplification product with a known base composition of an amplification product of a member of said viral family indicates the identity of said virus.

31. (previously presented) The method of Claim 30, further comprising repeating said amplifying, measuring and comparing steps using one or more additional pairs of primers.

32. (previously presented) The method of Claim 30, wherein said virus is a biological warfare viral threat agent.

33. (previously presented) The method of Claim 30, wherein said virus is identified at the sub-species level.

34. (previously presented) The method of Claim 30, wherein said base composition of said amplification product is measured by mass spectrometry.

35. -- 49. (canceled)

50. (previously presented) The method of claim 30 wherein said virus is a respiratory pathogen.

51. (previously presented) The method of claim 30 wherein said virus is a hepatitis C virus.

52. (previously presented) The method of claim 30 wherein said virus is an immunodeficiency virus.

53. (previously presented) The method of claim 30 wherein said virus is a member of a viral family selected from the group consisting of *Filoviridae, Flaviviridae, Arenaviridae, Bunyaviridae, Adenoviridae, Picornaviridae, Togaviridae,* and *Coronaviridae.*

54. (previously presented) The method of claim 30 wherein said housekeeping gene is a polymerase, a virion component, a helicase, a protease, a methyltransferase, or an accessory protein.

55. (previously presented) The method of claim 54 wherein said polymerase is RNA-dependent RNA polymerase, DNA-dependent DNA polymerase or DNA-dependent RNA polymerase.